**Driving Michigan's Economic Engine: Using Culture and Tourism to Fuel Community Prosperity**

Celebrating Ethnic Diversity in Tourism
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The following is a story about pasty, multiethnic Upper Peninsula—especially Finnish Americans, and the possibilities in our state for the promotion of culinary tourism.

When visitors arrive in the U.P. for the first time, they pass many, many signs merely stating "Pasties." After driving along the highway for a while, they finally stop at one of the places advertising pasty and inquire after this "pastee." The joke is on them; tourists who so innocently do this have been the brunt of Yooper jokes for decades.

What is pasty? [describe]

The origin of pasty is, of course, Cornwall. Miners from Cornwall arrived in the U.P. to help develop the copper and iron ore mines. They were followed some 10 years later by a number of Finnish Americans and Norwegians who were recruited because they, like the Cornish, had developed special techniques for working in deep mines. The Cornish provided for these new immigrants the model of an American. Given pressures to assimilate, the new immigrants picked up the pasty from these "Americans"believing they were eating American food and adopted and adapted it. And so the pasty began to spread. It became a U.P. regional food through a long process of change, acculturation, and creolization. Once a monoethnic food, it became a multiethnic dish and a regional specialization. Today it is considered the U.P.'s contribution to American cuisine.

Despite the regionalization of pasty, it is still claimed as the ethnic heritage of several groups. By and large, Yoopers know the Cornish origin, because of attention to it by mass media. Some even refer to it as a "Cousin Jack mouth organ," Cousin Jack being a popular synonym for Cornishmen. On the other hand, its association with Finns cannot be ignored. Raymond Sokolov, for example, a former Michigander and freelance ethnoculinary journalist, writes of the "Finnish flavor" of pasties. Some U.P. Finns themselves regard pasty as a Finnish food. This belief is perpetuated by family tradition, Finnish "ethnic" church suppers, and annual Finnish traditional celebrations, where pasty is a featured Finnish specialty. This Finnish association can be explained historically by the role of Finns in the diffusion of the pasty and by the predominance of Finns in the U.P. Many pasty shops, for example, seem to be owned and staffed by Finns. On the other hand, the family is an important factor in the issue of ethnic attribution: pasty is first and foremost a family tradition. Yoopers make and eat pasties according to the recipes and traditions of their mothers and grandmothers. Some Finns are unaware that other ethnic groups also make and eat pasties.

Marked changes are occurring in pasty. Some come about with use of local ingredients and some occur to meet specific ethnic tastes and traditions. [Examples} Commercialization, too, is causing a range of diversification that is often far from tradition. [Examples]

The first pasties available outside the home were sold at church pasty sales which are still very popular today. The first commercial pasty shops appeared just before World War II. As far as we can ascertain, an Italian American entrepreneur in Hurley, Wisconsin (on the Michigan border) baked pasties in his kitchen, peddled them from bar to bar in the early morning hours. In about 1938, he opened a pasty shop. After the war, other shops appeared across the border in Ironwood. Today pasty is made and sold in at least one outlet in nearly every U.P. community: pasty shops, bakeries, restaurants, bars, fast food counters, Dairy Queens, and grocery stores. They can be purchased hot, cold, partially baked, frozen, and day old.

Since completion of the Mackinac Bridge in 1957, tourism has become increasingly important in the U.P. local economy. And as a result pasty shops have proliferated. Along that stretch of highway beyond the bridge pasty shops advertising in three-foot-high, glow in the dark letters, exist to the virtual exclusion of other eateries. The personal names of the establishments, such as Granny's, Lehto's, Suzy's, assure strangers of a homemade treat. A consciousness of the regionalization of pasty is used, in effect, as a rhetorical strategy to enhance U.P. self image. Scholar Kenneth Burke writes that rhetoric serves to imbue individuals with heightened awareness and to persuade them by manipulating materials and ideas in an aesthetically pleasing manner. This has worked in the U.P.

Traditional forms of culture, such as pasty, are especially effective as persuasive devices because they bear the test of time and elicit a sympathetic response. Members of the media, restaurateurs, and U.P. residences in general have used the power of tradition to their advantage in creating a strategy for regional identification. The strategy includes editorializing on the use, meaning, and significance of pasty for regional inhabitants, which serves tourism well.

Narratives about pasty, for example, emphasize the ties with occupation and environment, as well as with specific groups. [Examples]

Ritualizing events around pasty is another strategy in regionalization of pasty to the benefit of culinary tourism. In 1983 The first Annual Pasty Throwing Contest occurred. [Describe]
2007 will be the third annual Pasty Day in the Keweenaw Peninsula [describe] And last week there was a contest for the one, the best pasty recipe to represent the U.P. on the Smithsonian Institute's website.

Pasty lore is also manipulated to express group boundaries, to distinguish Yoopers from outsiders, which expands the wealth of information for the tourist about this special food, something the visitor must experience. [Examples]

Pasty has always been a link between generations and different groups. But since the 1960s it has emerged with new meaning as a public, regional symbol that recalls the past, speaks of the present, and implies the future. Reference to its history, to its multiple ethnic associations, to its occupational and regional functions—as well as descriptions of its aesthetic effects—have bestowed new status on pasty. Serving pasty to outsiders is a conscious act intended to impress and persuade them about the good quality of U.P. life.